(b) A stretch of 6.1 Kms. of Indo-Bangladesh boundary is yet to be demarcated in three segments. The three segments are Daikhata-56 in West Bangal, Muhuri River (Belonia) in Tripura and Latitilla-Dumbari in Assam.

(c) The demarcation is pending on account of difference of opinion over interpretation of the relevant articles of the Land Boundary Agreement of 1974.

(d) This has led to delay in the implementation of the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement.

(e) Yes.

(f) Following discussions at the diplomatic level, the Governments of India and Bangladesh have set up a Joint Boundary Working Group to address all issues relating to pending demarcation of the Indo-Bangladesh boundary. The Joint Boundary Working Group has held two meetings to far.

Pressure on North Korea to dismantle atomic weapons

3662. SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has urged the US that they should build pressure on North Korea instead of dealing with Iraq alone;

(b) if so, whether Government are aware that the US Government is considering to pressurise China on North Korea;

(c) whether both the countries, US and China, have been able to persuade North Korea to dismantle its atomic weapons; and

(d) if so, to what extent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (d)The North Korean question has been raised by India with its interlocutors at several levels.

While responding to a question on the three-way meeting to be held in Beijing on North Korean issue, US Secretary of State Colic Powell stated on 16 April, in the course of a Press Interview in Washington DC, that "we have been in intence consultations with our friends in the region and we have put in place arrangements for a multilateral meeting, initially consisting

of the United States, North Korea and China." Secretary of State Powell also stated that "This is good news for the region. It is good news for North Korea, frankly, because it gives them the oppurtunity to present their positions, to come into this trilateral meeting and speak candidly in front of the United States and the Chinese with respect to their concerns; and it gives us the opportunity to do the same; and it gives the Chinese, who have a commitment to a non-nuclear Korean Peninsula, to express their point of view as well".

Expenditure by Indian Missions and Posts

3663. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Rs. 756 crores in foreign exchange is being spent annually on our 156 Missions and Posts abroad;

(b) whether some austerity measures are being introduced and if so, the percentage of savings anticipated thereby;

(c) whether any study has been conducted towards relocation of some of the Indian Missions to make them cost effective; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Yes.

(b) In accordance with Ministry of Finance guidelines, austerity meassures such as cut of 25% in DA rates for local tours by officials in Missions/Posts abroad and ban on purchase of new vehicles has been introduced. The effect of austerity measures is offset by increasing cost of living at stations abroad as well as on account of depreciation of Indian currency *vis-a-vis* major currencies of the world.

(c) and (d) The Ministry of reviews, on a regular basis, relocation of Indian Missions keeping in view the considerations of promotion of national interests in strategic, political, economic, commercial, consular and other spheres. In order to make our diplomatic representation cost effective, Ministry regularly looks at the possibility of covering countries through Concurrent Accreditation. Presently, India has disptomatic relations with 81 countries through Concurrent Accreditation.The Ministry also closed down 14 Missions during the last 12 years with a view to cutting down on expenditure.